

College Financial Aid Deadlines Are Important; Free Local Resources Available

Bismarck – Now is the time of year when college-bound students and parents need to think about starting the student financial aid process. Keeping track of college form deadlines is important. This year, the processing deadline for state aid has been moved up to March 15, 2004 as compared to the processing deadline of April 15 in previous years.

“The first thing students and families need to do in order to apply for financial aid is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA),” says Julie Kubisiak, director of Student Loans of North Dakota at Bank of North Dakota. “The FAFSA form will determine eligibility for financial aid, such as Pell Grants, work-study programs and student loans for students and parents.”

“It is very important that students and families pay attention to deadline dates when applying for financial aid and scholarships,” reminds Kubisiak. “Some college financial aid options have limited funding; therefore, the ‘early bird gets the worm’ philosophy will apply.”

To meet North Dakota’s March 15, 2004 processing deadline, students and families are encouraged to submit their FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 to ensure their FAFSA is processed by the deadline date. Tax information for both the college-bound student and parents is needed when completing the FAFSA form; therefore, it is important that tax returns are completed early. The FAFSA form can be completed electronically at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

“For many first-time applicants of financial aid, the process can be overwhelming,” Kubisiak says. “To help make this process easier for them, Student Loans of North Dakota has a free resource, College Information Service (CIS), which students and parents can call with questions about financial aid and the financial aid process. CIS also develops many free publications to walk them through the financial aid process and detail the different aid options available to students and parents.”

For questions and to obtain financial aid publications, contact College Information Service at Student Loans of North Dakota at 1-800-554-2717. Student Loans of North Dakota is administered by Bank of North Dakota.